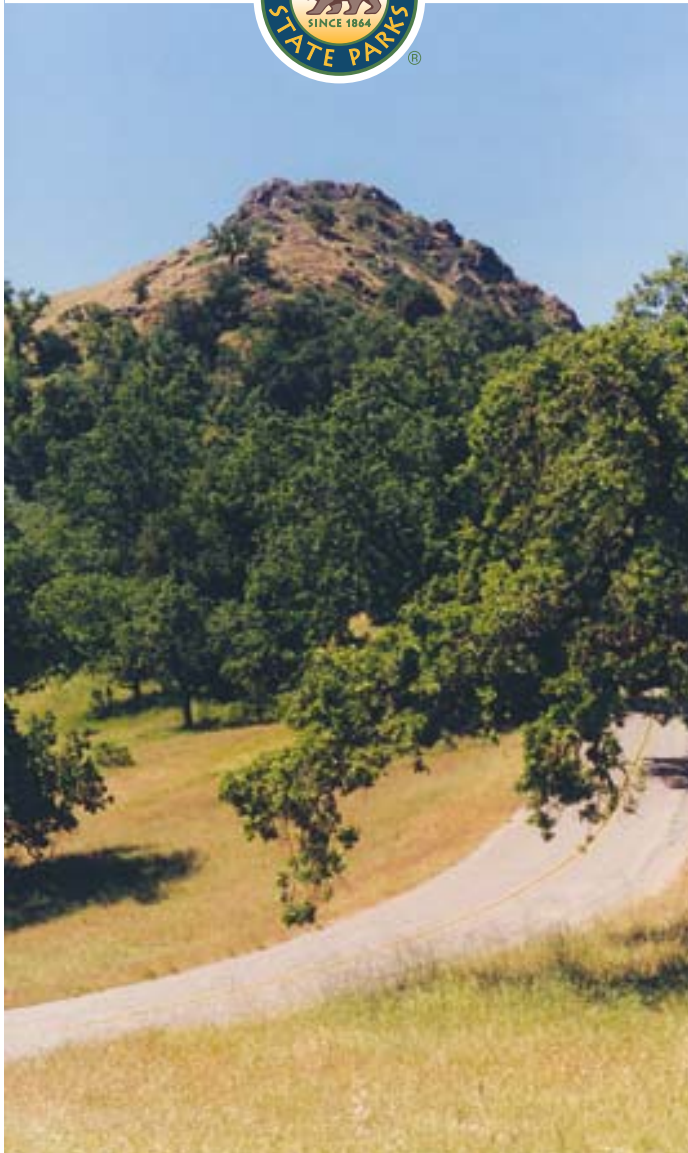


Fremont Peak State Park



Our Mission

The mission of the California Department of Parks and Recreation is to provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.

GRAY DAVIS

Governor

MARY D. NICHOLS

Secretary for Resources

RUSTY AREIAS

Director, California State Parks



California State Parks does not discriminate against individuals with disabilities. Prior to arrival, visitors with disabilities who need assistance should contact the park at the phone number below. To receive this publication in an alternate format, write to the Communications Office at the following address.

CALIFORNIA	For information call:
STATE PARKS	800-777-0369
P.O. Box 942896	916-653-6995, outside the U.S.
Sacramento, CA	888-877-5378, TTY
94296-0001	888-877-5379, without TTY

www.parks.ca.gov

Fremont Peak State Park

P.O. Box 787

San Juan Bautista, CA 95045

(831)623-4526 • Observatory: 623-2465

*At the 3,169-foot peak,
trails lead from
the upper parking lot to a
spectacular 360-degree
daytime view and a
nighttime visual feast
for stargazers.*



At **Fremont Peak State Park**, day visitors and campers can picnic and bird watch among the pine and oak woodlands, or walk along the four miles of moderate trails. The 159-acre park is about 45 miles from San Jose, 11 miles south of San Juan Bautista, off State Highway 156. The approach on San Juan Canyon Road is hard-surfaced, but winds through canyons and over ridges; trailers or vehicles should not exceed 25 feet in length. Winter conditions affecting the road include dense fog, ice and occasional snow.

At the 3,169-foot peak, trails lead from the upper parking lot to a spectacular 360-degree daytime view and a nighttime visual feast for stargazers. Day visitors can enjoy vistas of Monterey Bay, and the Salinas and San Benito Valleys. Also visible from this vantage point are the Santa Cruz, Diablo and Gavilan ranges, and the Santa Lucia Mountains. And on a crystal clear day, the lucky visitor might even be able to spot the Sierra Nevada range. At night, visitors are dazzled by constellations and far galaxies not visible in light-polluted city skies.

The park's group campground must be reserved and 20 primitive campsites are available first-come, first-served. For travelers who wish to ensure a campsite on arrival, a few additional primitive campsites may be reserved by calling (800) 444-7275. Guided nature walks are available during spring, summer and early fall. Be sure to bring plenty of drinking water.



John C. Frémont

WHY IS IT CALLED FREMONT PEAK?

In 1846, while California was still a part of Mexico, Army Captain John C. Frémont of the Topographic Engineers led an expeditionary force of 60 men into the Salinas Valley and to the top of Gavilan Peak. Ostensibly, Frémont and his group were there to explore and survey the area. However, the group's makeup was clearly an armed force. The peak was a strategic location—from his encampment Frémont could see anyone approaching for miles. Long suspicious of Frémont's motives, Mexican Commandante General José Castro ordered him to leave California immediately. In defiance, Frémont quickly built a log stockade at the peak and raised a U.S. military flag.

However, Castro's orders were supported by U.S. Consul Thomas O. Larkin in Monterey. In a hand-delivered letter, Larkin told Frémont that he had to leave the area. In the middle of a windy night, after his hastily erected flag was blown over, Frémont gathered his unruly troops and abandoned Gavilan Peak.

During the Mexican American war, Frémont led the California Battalion, but in 1847 U.S. General Stephen W. Kearny censured him for his "conduct in California." Frémont was arrested, court-martialed and found guilty of mutiny, disobedience and conduct to the prejudice of good order and military discipline. President James K. Polk later removed the charge of mutiny, and Frémont became the U.S. Senator representing California's Mariposa area. In 1856 he conducted an unsuccessful campaign for president.

The Native Sons and Daughters of the Golden West placed a commemorative plaque on Fremont Peak in 1926, and this area became a state park in 1936.



Interior live oak leaves

WILDLIFE

The northern slopes of Fremont Peak State Park are covered with manzanita, scrub oak, toyon and coyote brush. On southern exposures, open grasslands are green in spring and golden brown in summer and fall. Hundreds of flowering plants also grow on the mountain. The floral displays are vibrant in spring, subdued in summer and fall, and quiet in the faint snowdrifts of winter.

Turkey vultures soar above the canyons, as do the hawks that give the Gavilan Mountain Range its Spanish name. The trees and brush are alive with birds—chickadees, finches, hummingbirds, thrushes, woodpeckers and more. The lucky visitor may also see or hear coyotes, snakes, deer, bobcats, raccoons and an occasional fox. Contact the park to arrange guided nature hikes in spring, summer or early fall.



California quail

THE OBSERVATORY

Light pollution from surrounding urban areas reduces views of the night sky's wonders. Yet here, a coastal marine layer of clouds often masks lights from lower elevations, permitting a splendid view of overhead stars and constellations.

Volunteer astronomers began giving evening talks at Fremont Peak in 1986. Today, visitors are treated to a short program about the current night sky and offered a view of the sky's starry wonders from the 30-inch observatory telescope.

The programs take place April through October on Saturday evenings without a full moon. Contact the park to confirm dates, times and accessibility information. It is best to arrive before sunset, because the brightness of vehicle headlights or flashlights will limit observation and disrupt astronomers' night vision.

These programs are made possible by the dedication and donations of members of the Fremont Peak Observatory Association, in cooperation with California State Parks.

PLEASE REMEMBER:

- Park operating hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 1/2 hour after sunset.
- Weather is changeable—it is advisable to dress in layers.
- Parents are asked to supervise children around the telescopes.
- Do not touch any part of any telescope, especially glass optical surfaces, unless the owner instructs you on proper methods.
- If you need to use a flashlight, cover the end of it with a piece of red cellophane wrapped with a rubber band to hold it in place.



View of Fremont Peak

NEARBY STATE PARK

- San Juan Bautista State Historic Park, in San Juan Bautista at 2nd and Washington Streets
(831) 623-4881/4526



This park is supported in part through a nonprofit organization.
For more information contact: Fremont Peak Observatory Association
P.O. Box 787, San Juan Bautista, CA 95045 • (831) 623-2465 • www.fpoa.net

Fremont Peak State Park



Legend

- Paved Road
- Unpaved Road
- Trail
- Parking
- Restrooms
- Telephone
- Campground
- Group Camp
- Picnic Area
- Group Picnic Area
- Gate
- Viewpoint